A

LETTER

TO

Governor Johnſtone, &c. &c.

ON

INDIAN AFFAIRS.

[by Nathaniel Brassey Halhed]

Ne quid detrimenti Reſpublica caperet.

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A LETTER TO GOVERNOR JOHNSTONE, &c. &c.

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SIR,

BY the prevalence of popular prejudice, and the contention of rival interefts, by the unqualified affertions of a few defigning individuals, and the defective ftate of general information, has the Eaft-India Company been reduced to almoft inextricable difficulties. In the hour of difmay, and in her laft ftruggle for expiring rights, had not You voluntarily and vigoroufly ftepped forth to her affiftance, fhe would, ere the prefent moment, have

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become the ſervile tool of arbitrary power, or the paſſive victim of hungry Faction.— Alternately threatened and cajoled, fleeced and reviled, ſcrutinized and miſunderſtood, too long has ſhe ſilently wept over the infringements of her privileges, the mutilation of her charters, the diſturbance of her arrangements, and the diſpoſal of her property. Every ſyſtem of policy, every plan of commerce, every principle of action, by which (in conformity to frequent acts of the legiſlature, and under the immediate encouragement of charters from the Crown) the proſperity of our affairs in Aſia has gradually augmented the trade, the power, and the reſources of the Mother Country, ſo as to become one of the moſt important pledges for the ſtability of the empire, have been violently and repeatedly explored, to gratify a malignant, or an intereſted curioſity. Every record which might diſplay the ſources from whence are derived the Company's wealth and dominion, has been wantonly torn from its ſacred repoſitory, and circulated in reports and appendixes through the whole European world. By theſe means have her councils been diſtracted at home, and her deſigns

frustrated abroad: The chain of mutual dependance, which bound up all her servants into one connected body, and directed the aggregate impulse of their united exertions to the one grand object of the Company's success, has been broken: Her vigilant and inveterate enemies, by thus acquiring a knowledge of her intentions, of her preparations, and of her possible resources, have been instructed to evade, to counteract, to overturn all her schemes, and to pursue their own in full security; while her immediate agents by suggestions, by menaces, by temptations, have been seduced into a partial departure from the strait outline of their delegated functions; have been encouraged in measures hostile to their best servants abroad, and destructive of all their own official consequence. In this perilous situation, while war preys on her extremities, and influence corrodes her vitals, languishing equally under the severity of her disorder, and the insidious prescriptions of her political empiricks, has your animated assistance exhilarated her with a new and unexpected chance for life. The task you have undertaken is not less toilsome than generous; fresh impediments will incessantly retard your

progreſs—difficulty will ſtart out of difficulty, and labour beget labour. After all, the ſubject is ſo complex, the drama is ſo wound up with danger and diſtreſs, that imagination itſelf can ſcarcely invent for it (within the limits of human probability) a ſafe and a ſatisfactory cataſtrophe to either of the parties. What *can* be done, You will do—and I doubt not, but the ſtrength and ſteadineſs of your efforts will as much do credit to your head, as the voluntary liberality of your interpoſition has already diſtinguiſhed your heart. If I have taken the liberty to preſent you here with a few reflections, they are not ſuch as I can for a moment ſuppoſe may conduce to your better information, but they may ultimately advance my own and that of the public; for wherever I ſhall have been wrong, I truſt implicitly to your future orations, in the courſe of the enſuing debates, for correction; and I flatter myſelf, that upon the whole, I ſhall have contributed ſome ſmall portion to that general maſs of knowledge which muſt, or which ought to be collected, before the final deciſion of one of the moſt important topics that ever was agitated in the council of the nation.

To me the fyftematic regularity neceffary for the well-doing of a body conftituted like the Eaft-India Company, where commerce and politicks are fo intimately interwoven, feems to be as much liable to danger from too frequent inftances of parliamentary interruption, as her independent rights from the encroaching patronage of the Crown. No doubt we more immediately feel an arbitrary fummons, which difplaces our firft confidential fervants, and obtrudes on us others, in whom (however worthy) we cannot at once repofe that implicit confidence which long-tried fidelity alone can juftify: But to have our fecrets expofed, our plans fufpended, our Directors intimidated, and our arrangements thrown into confufion by reiterated formalities of legiflative inveftigation, tends ultimately to damp the fpirit of mercantile enterprife, to difcompofe that orderly mechanifm which is the very foul of an extenfive trade, and to clog all the intricate operations of credit. You, Sir, have undoubtedly traced the Company in her filent progrefs towards maturity, and to that fplendor which rendered her an object for minifterial concupifcence. You

have

have obferved how an unforefeen ftroke of misfortune laid her in a fupplicating pofture at the feet of Adminiftration, in 1772; and I think you will agree with me that fhe then paffed her grand climacterick, never again to recover her youthful health or vigour. To that unfortunate inftant, when a temporary convention was fubftituted in the place of a conclufive treaty, when her embarraffed affairs were thrown on the Speaker's table as a perpetual tub for the patriotic whale, moderate and thinking men will afcribe the too evident fymptoms of her probable diffolution; and why? Becaufe Parliament has too often chofen to put itfelf in the place of the Company, without having the leifure neceffary for an adequate attention to its affairs; becaufe too frequent revifion breaks the thread of progreffive action; and becaufe, when old fyftems are overturned, eftablifhed regulations fuperfeded, and new experiments obtruded upon ancient habits, reform is but another name for diforder; becaufe an act of Parliament, empowering the Crown to grant the Company a renewal of their charter for ten years, feems a kind of national warrant for the uninterrupted exercife of all the func-

tions,

tions, and enjoyment of all the privileges conferred by that charter for those ten years; becauſe, in ſhort, the very principle, that Parliament has a right at every turn of affairs to interfere in the internal managements of the Eaſt-India Company (however true and juſt as far as reſpects parliamentary omnipotence) may perhaps be deemed extremely inexpedient in its effects, and liable to be converted into a moſt dangerous inſtrument for the purpoſes of faction, of avarice, or of ambition. The continuation or removal of the Governor-general of Bengal is but the tool of the preſent hour, and of the preſent workmen. The mine will ſtill be rich, when the ore now working ſhall be exhauſted: other adventurers will preſently diſcover a freſh vein. It is the *principle* that I wiſh to combat: it is not a victory in favour of this or that rival for government, that can effectually ſerve the Company, but a decided acknowledgement of her rights as held under Royal Charter, of her independence for a certain number of years as ſanctioned and ſecured by act of Parliament. But as the name of Haſtings has already furniſhed the word for attack, it muſt

now become alſo the ſignal for defence. If a corporate body, like the Eaſt-India Company, be liable to theſe inceſſant ſhocks, where is the liberty of the ſubject, where the faith of the Crown, where the ſtability of law? *The next blow may be on the Bank.* We can all recollect the wonderful revolution that took place in the Company's property, by the act of 13. Geo. III. when the qualification which ſhould entitle a proprietor to vote, was raiſed from five hundred pounds to one thouſand pounds ſtock, and when the duration of the office of Director was prolonged from one year to four. Before that memorable æra, a qualification to vote was as much my property as a freehold; and the regular change of Directors, by a ſyſtem of annual rotation, was thought the palladium which would ever preſerve the proprietary from a graſping ariſtocracy. We may perhaps, ſoon hear of quadrennial or perpetual *Bank Directors*—we may have a Governor of the Bank by Act of Parliament, and only removeable with the approbation of the Crown. It is vain to urge the difference of the caſe, with reſpect to the two Companies, while they both hold their exiſtence on the

ſame

ſame tenure, a Royal Charter. The law, which diſcriminates not between rich and poor, is equally indifferent to all other accidents of circumſtance, where the baſis of the claim is one and the ſame. Each of theſe grand members of the State owes its original eſtabliſhment to the voluntary combination of private merchants. The India Company's powers were as explicit as thoſe of the Bank, and the purpoſes of its inſtitution as well defined. They were to fit out ſhips for an Eaſtern commerce, and ſhift for themſelves in an unknown world. Events gave them power and wealth, and their acquiſitions are ſo much clear gain to the State. But now that they have raiſed a fortune, they muſt conſent to have it managed by *ſtrange* ſtewards. What bulwark has the Bank againſt ſimilar treatment? *That* body too, has riſen to a pitch of wealth and conſequence unſuſpected by its firſt contrivers: why ſhould no patriot find it convenient to call for a reviſion of its ſtatutes, an examination of its accounts, and a ſtatement of its annual profits? No doubt he might diſcover, that it could well afford a ſalary of five or ten thouſand pounds per annum to its Governor;

nor would he want a plea to propofe himfelf, or his coufin, or his informer, to the office, and to conftitute it an eftablifhment for life. One ftretch of prerogative authorizes another. If the Eaft India Company muft be fettered in the *appointment* of their Governor-General of Bengal, or of any their fervants, civil or military, they cannot long expect to hold the power of *difmiffion*; which if it be once wrefted from them, their influence and authority in the directing, ordering, and management of their affairs, commercial as well as political, will be utterly annihilated. Yet why fhould Miniftry content themfelves with the fingle act of oppofing the Company's wifhes for the continuation of their Governor-General? It would be a curious fpeculation to reverfe the inftance, and fuppofe, that the Court of Proprietors having come to a peremptory refolution of recalling a Governor, Miniftry had forbidden the difpatch of the neceffary paragraphs——how inftantaneous would be the Company's ruin on fuch an event, I need not attempt to delineate; and yet we are at this moment treading on the very brink of the precipice! But grant that the Crown means in future to be more reten-

tive

tive of its interference, and ſhall hereafter adhere cloſely to the letter and ſpirit of that clauſe in the Regulating Act of Parliament, which limits its powers of prohibition *to articles immediately relating to war and peace.*— Still, if it ſhall be in the habit of taking umbrage at every act of the Company, which it ſhall chuſe to conſider as refractory, or unaccommodating, and in apparent warmth of temper, determine to make all ſuch queſtions the objects of parliamentary diſcuſſion, the ſpirit of conſtitutional reſiſtance, and virtuous inflexibility, will at length be worn out in the conteſt, or the confuſion of perpetual and harraſſing references throw the Company's affairs into a ſtate of bankruptcy.

The Court of Proprietors is the deliberative body, the parliament of the Company; the Directors are its miniſtry. In them is lodged the executive power, and it is neceſſary that they ſhould not be too often changed, leſt the courſe of public buſineſs be thereby impeded. The patriots of the preſent hour call loudly for an annual repreſentation in Parliament, on the idea that every man of common ſenſe is qualified to give his

opinion without ſerving an apprenticeſhip. On the ſame principle the Company's affairs would not be interrupted, if each quarterly General Court produced a new ſet of Proprietors. But neither Parliament nor Proprietors could with ſafety venture to aſſume to themſelves the management of the detail, and the functions of their Miniſters and Directors. It is only in the grand outlines of conduct, in the leading features of the ſyſtem, that the collective body can or ought to exert its powers of controul; but *then* its language is abſolute, its commands irreſiſtible, and obedience unconditional. "The independence of America," ſays the national voice, "is become a meaſure neceſſary for the ſalvation of this country." "We inſiſt upon an explicit recognition of American independence," echoes the Parliament—Miniſters ſigh, and acquieſce; and yet we all know the ſentiments of the Crown. "Mr. Haſtings is the only man," ſay the Company, "who, in the preſent poſture of our Aſiatic affairs, is qualified to be Governor-General of Bengal." "We think it adviſable to remove him," reply the Di-

rectors. " We poſitively forbid you," rejoin the Proprietors, *ſix to one*. " It is againſt " the wiſh of the two Chairs," anſwer the Directors, " but we muſt ſubmit." Here is no ſophiſtry, no trick, no management; a plain queſtion is agitated in a public and peaceable aſſembly: reaſon operates on their underſtandings, and their reſolution is the reſult of calm conviction. " Mr. Haſtings," ſay the Directors, " has been cenſured by " two reſpectable Committees of the Houſe " of Commons. On *their* reports the Houſe " has judged him worthy of recall, and we " therefore recall him." The Proprietors, in anſwer, urge, " That Mr. Haſtings has " been accuſed of opinions which he did " not profeſs, and of acts which he did not " command; of wars, whoſe commence- " ment was equally out of his knowledge, " and againſt his advice; of revolutions, to " which he contributed nothing but perſonal " riſk and a miraculous eſcape; and of " deſpotiſm, of diſobedience, and ſundry " indefinite charges, whoſe impenetrable ob- " ſcurity alone ſecures them from flat con- " tradiction. If the Houſe of Commons,

" in

" in voting his recall*, mean to influence " our councils, or dictate to our Directors, " it

* It is worthy of remark, that the vote for the recall of Mr. Hastings, that loaded him with undefined charges, was never debated at the Secret Committee; a fact not generally known. It was indeed brought forward under that impression, as a kind of compromise, and may be fairly termed a parliamentary juggle. On the 14th of May last, in the Rockingham administration, when Mr. Burke and Mr. Fox were in the plenitude of power, Sir Adam Fergusson, the Lord Advocate being absent, (after a conference in the House of Commons with Mr. Fox, Mr. Burke, and Gen Smith) proposed to a Committee of the whole House, that the forty-four resolutions which had been brought forward by the Secret Committee should be voted. When the House had gone through them, Sir Adam proposed another, in substance as follows; " That it was the duty of the " Court of Directors to remove those persons whom the " House of Commons had censured." Mr. Robinson, member for Canterbury, observed upon this occasion, that the House *was rather thin*, considering the importance of the resolution. It passed, however, there being at the time *twenty-eight* members in the House. This resolution, if carried into effect, would have removed every man in power in India; perhaps this might be the reason that it never was reported to the House, though a resolution of what is termed a Committee of the whole House. On the 28th of May the Lord Advocate brought forward his resolution for the recall of

" it hath exceeded its jurisdiction. We are " Proprietors of the territories of Bengal, " &c. for a certain number of years, under " the most sacred of all compacts, the pledge " of the Royal Charter, and the authority of " the whole Legislature. If our Governor " be criminal, he is at all times amenable to " the laws of his country. If there be " grievances, we who are his immediate mas-" ters are the persons aggrieved: If there be " wrongs, we have both the will and the " means to redress them.—We have seen " *none.*—You and your Committees have " not as yet proved a tittle against him: " The *onus probandi* certainly lies on the ac-" cusers.—Shew why we ought to remove " him, and we will do it upon evidence: In " the mean time, we deem it absolutely ne-" cessary for our immediate exigencies that " he should continue in the Chair."——In this state of the business the Crown unex-pectedly

of Mr. Hastings and Mr. Hornby, and it was carried, there being at the time *forty-two* members in the House. Mr. Fox spoke upon the occasion, allowed Mr. Hastings to possess both abilities and integrity, but voted for his removal, because his plan of politics had been disapproved of.

pectedly interferes: Parties grow warm: Miniſtry enter the liſts againſt Mr. Haſtings; the Company, alarmed at the imminent danger of their moſt important rights, feel their very exiſtence to depend on his ſupport. The matter is thrown into Parliament; a thouſand diſcordant intereſts will be implicated in the ſtruggle, and You, Sir, nobly undertake the cauſe of abſent merit. It is not the leaſt wonderful part of the ſpectacle, to obſerve Miniſtry and Oppoſition taking the ſame ſide of the queſtion for Mr. Haſtings's recall, on pleas totally contradictory. But though the object be different, the paſſion, you will ſay, is ſtill the ſame. Miniſtry contend for *patronage*, the other party toil for bread: and thus it is, that the eagerneſs of each prevents them from taking notice of their inconſiſtency; and that while both are fighting their adverſary's battles in an unnatural confederacy, the very means by which they ſeparately puſh the ſame point, preciſely counteract each other's views. "The Mini-"ſter intends to caſt a veil over Eaſt-India "delinquency," ſays Oppoſition, by way of ſtimulus to the attack. "*The abuſes and diſ-" orders which prevail in the Bengal Govern-" ment*

" *ment, the various, heavy, and complicated op-* " *pressions which the natives suffer under them,* " *despotism over the subjects abroad, disobedience* " *to the government of this country, and a waste of* " *public treasure for private purposes*, cry aloud for " justice on the delinquent." " Mr. Hastings," adds the foaming orator, " is that delinquent. " I stake my character against his, and " pledge myself to produce evidence of " facts." " I renounce," replies the Ministerial Mouth-piece, " all idea of delinquency: " I have borne testimony to the merit and " the integrity of the Governor-General, " but I would recall him on the principle of " *expediency*: and I flatter myself that I shall " demonstrate this expediency to the satis- " faction of the House." Can those who hold out Mr. Hastings as a culprit, and those who acquit him of all suspicion of culpability, unite in the same vote? Will those independent senators, who shall remark such palpable contradictions and glaring prejudices, cordially join with either? Forbid it, reason and common sense! Forbid it, public justice and national honour!—The die, however, is now cast, and the parties have gone too far to recede: the different questions of expediency and of de-

 linquency

linquency must severally be brought before the House, and I hope not before empty benches*; but who shall guess at the sentence, when we know not even the exact counts of the indictment?

It is generally conjectured that the *accusation* will consist of two members, and that an elaborate, extravagant, tragi-comic harangue will first expatiate upon "the extra-"ordinary expulsion of a Rajah of the highest "rank, &c. &c. from his dominions," and next, *on a secret article* permitted to be conditionally inserted in an intended treaty with the Rajah of Berar, of which he never received the slightest hint. On the first point it will be argued (with a proper quantity of pathetic interludes and theatrical apostrophes) that the Governor-General had no right to propose exacting a fine of fifty lacks of rupees from Rajah Cheyt Sing: that he had no right to demand a sum for contingent expences of the war over and above his stipulated

* Twenty-eight members only were in the House when Sir Adam Fergusson's forty-fifth resolution passed, and forty-two when the vote for the recall of Mr. Hastings and Mr. Hornby was proposed and carried.

lated rent, and that he had no right on any grounds to expel him from his hereditary eſtate; perhaps alſo that he had no right to advance the rents upon his ſucceſſor. In the ſecond article will probably be urged the fatal policy of uniting the formidable powers of the Mahrattas under one active command, the danger of drawing on ourſelves the vengeance of the Nizam, ſhould we encourage Booſla to invade his dominions, and the conſequences of that grand alliance of the Aſiatic Princes formed under *his* auſpices as a counterbalance to Britiſh influence. The above are, as far as I can judge, the *ſtrong grounds* of the *criminatory party*. It has been remarked, Sir, upon the ſubject of your late admirable oration in Leadenhall-ſtreet, that Mr. Haſtings's friends have ſelected all the ſtrong points of argument which the ſubject afforded, and *made the moſt of them*. Now I apprehend, that You, and all thoſe whom conviction has engaged in that gentleman's defence, would ſcout the obſervation with contempt. They have not *ſelected* the ſtrong points, but the caſe afforded no other. They have combated ſophiſtry by ſimple proofs,

and wanton falsehoods by plain matter of fact. His enemies have had all the choice of subject: they have taken up such points as, to their jaundiced eye, appeared to afford the most colour; and to say the truth, *They have made the most of them*. For they have asserted delinquency where they have yet to *prove* error: they undauntedly urge the same sophisticated tale after twenty refutations: and but the other day their *cloud-compelling champion* exaggerated the *visionary* objects of the Governor-General's oppression to *thirty millions*. This is *making the most* of a point, with a vengeance! And yet he had recently before his eyes his topographical friend's excellent delineation, where he might trace the progress of the Governor-General's glory to the very farthest limits of its influence, though the page ungenerously sunk his name; and where he might have learned the state of population in Bengal sufficiently to have kept himself within the bounds of oratorical probability. But to our argument.

When

When the Governor-General ſet out on his journey for Benares, Cheyt Sing's preparations for revolt were almoſt at the point of maturity; of which no evidence can be more fully illuſtrative, than the number of his troops, the condition of his forts, and the plenitude of his magazines, as diſcovered in the courſe of the revolution. Mr. Haſtings, in the true ſpirit of candour, has informed the public of his intention to have aſſeſſed the Raja in a fine of forty or fifty lacks of rupees, but Cheyt Sing never gave him time to propoſe a ſyllable of ſuch his purpoſe. While he meant to have lulled the Governor-General's vigilance for a few days with the ſubmiſſion of a well-acted repentance, the ſuddenneſs of his arreſt precipitated all his ſchemes, and probably ſaved the Governor's life. Had the Raja's guilty conſcience permitted him to perſevere in his affected docility of conduct, had he quietly paid the fine, and ſuffered the unſuſpecting victim to depart from Benares without alarm, there can hardly be a doubt but ſome of his numerous ambuſcades of banditti might have maſſacred the Governor-General and his whole eſcort, before they could poſſibly reach

Chunar.

Chunar. But the providential arreſt diſconcerted all Cheyt Sing's cool-blooded hypocriſy, and while it certainly anticipated the hour of rebellion *, ſerved perhaps as an additional

* A few individuals among us make no ſcruple to inſinuate, that Cheyt Sing had no premeditated plan of rebellion, and that his conduct was the reſult of inſtant reſentment and deſpair on his arreſt. But on thoſe perverted minds, which a peruſal of Mr. Haſtings's candid narrative of the tranſactions at Benares, together with its appendix, ſhall not have awakened to the palpable impoſſibility, that a body of armed men, ſo numerous and well appointed, as that which aſſiſted in the Raja's eſcape, and perpetrated the maſſacre of our troops, ſhould have been inſtantly aſſembled on the ſpur of the occaſion, without long-prepared and deep-laid deſign, neither argument nor proof will make any impreſſion.

Thoſe who can repreſent Cheyt Sing's rebellion as the impulſe of the moment, may well deny the glaring intrigues of the two plotting Begums of Oude, and the dangerous ſpirit of defection, which their machinations had raiſed in the Vizier's dominions.

To the author of ſuch wretched ſurmiſes, I leave it to enjoy the contemptible triumph of diſſembled diſbelief. I have no pleaſure in purſuing phantoms; a refutation of his aſſertions is my preſent purpoſe, not a reformation of his underſtanding or principles. In addition to the connected ſeries of deduction, by which Cheyt Sing's motives are indiſputably demonſtrated from

ditional ſtimulus to the revolt of his deluded followers. You, Sir, have eſtabliſhed be-

yond

from his actions, and to the ſeveral reſpectable teſtimonials which have already appeared to confirm each part of the charge, I ſhall here quote the following document, which has not yet been made public, but of which the authentic record may be peruſed at the India-Houſe.

Extract of a letter from Mr. John Holland, our Reſident at the Nizam's Court, to the Governor-general, and Supreme Council of Bengal, dated Hydrabad, 8th October, 1781. Entered in Bengal Conſultations, 29th October, 1781.

After ſtating what the Nizam had ſaid to him the preceding day, relative to the hoſtile diſpoſition of the Mahrattas, which the Nizam had learned from the Mahratta Miniſter, Mr. Holland adds theſe words, "His High-" "neſs ſaid, that the (Mahratta) Miniſter had inform-" "ed him of *a plan of general attack* upon our poſſeſ-" "ſions: one numerous army of horſe had been ap-" "pointed to the ſervice of laying waſte our Circars; " "another with Booſla and other Mahratta Chiefs, " "was to enter Bengal by the way of Cuttack, and a" "third, Scindia's, &c. was to proceed from Malva, " "*to ſupport the inſurrection of Cheyt Sing, and other*" "*Zemindars*, to join Nujuff Cawn, and to penetrate" "into the heart of the Bengal Provinces."

Cheyt Sing was arreſted the 18th of Auguſt. This letter is dated the 8th of October—an interval of only forty-

yond the poſſibility of cavil, in your late for-
cible ſpeech to the Court of Proprietors, that
the

forty-nine days, in which it was barely poſſible, that the account of the arreſt ſhould travel from Benares to Hydrabad; but which utterly precludes the probability of the Nizam's having received from thence, letters of any later date, with information of thoſe very extenſive military preparations which the Raja was ſubſequently diſcovered to have ſecretly arranged—much leſs that he ſhould have *then* have obtained accurate intelligence of thoſe facts, which afterwards proved the exiſtence of a very powerful diſaffected party in Oude, fomented by the two ambitious Begums, to which Mr. Holland's letter moſt indubitably alludes.

The converſation here related, paſſed on the 7th of October, and was in conſequence of a *previous* conference between the Nizam and the Mahratta Miniſter, to whom alſo we muſt allow ſome time for receiving and connecting his intelligence from different quarters; which will carry back the dates ſo far, as to leave a clear impoſſibility for any part of this account to have been the produce of *ex poſt facto* information.

But when we conſider, that the Mahratta Miniſter's communication to the Nizam, was not of detached ſcraps of intelligence, derived to himſelf from various channels, but of a deliberate connected plan of conduct, ſeverally agreed to by different powers, at almoſt the different extremities of India; and that this circumſtantial account could only have come to the Miniſter from

his

the Governor-General, as reprefentative of Cheyt Sing's immediate paramount, had a clear right to infift on his provifional aid for the general burthen of the war. It is a right, Sir, coeval with the exiftence of all Government; and as it is authorized by plain reafon, and the very nature of things, fo it is warranted by precedents from the Mogul hiftory. Under the proof of this right is comprehended a full conviction of the Raja's culpability in refiftance. To fuch culpability, and for fuch a culprit, what is the adequate, the convenient, and, I may add, the only conftitutional mode of punifhment?—A fine: and what the *ultima ratio* of feodal authority?—Difpoffeffion. You will here naturally recollect a paragraph which I have quoted in my fixth letter, in the Morning Herald—It is as follows:

his principles at Poona, we muft of neceffity allow a date of fome months at leaft, to the Machiavelian bafis of Cheyt Sing's infurrection, founded on the known diffaffection of the two Begums, and on expectations of great collateral affiftance, in confequence of a general compact for our extirpation.

Extract of a secret letter from the Governor-General and Council of Bengal, dated Jan. 15, 1776.

"We thought it adviseable to fix a proper "weight and standard to be invariably observed by the Raja in all money which "might be coined, on pain of FORFEITING the Mint, and being liable to *any* "PENALTY the Board might *think fit* to "impose, on the *first* instance of any deviation."

Can the language of man convey in stronger terms a clear explicit assumption of all the rights and functions of Sovereign Power, or a more full specification of the mode of procedure to be applied to in cases of disobedience, *Fine* and *Dispossession*?—Rebellion, surely, is a crime of as black a dye as adulteration of coin? But revolt was not a species of guilt, which it was suspected that the Raja's known dastardly nature and avaricious habits would incline him, from any possible motives of interest or policy, to commit. Debasing of coin better suited with his genius and his pursuits. Had he thus corrupted the channels of commerce by a miserable fraud on the credulity

dulity of his people, he was to have been *fined* for the benefit of his paramount: but when the ſinews of Government are ſhrunk by his niggard obſtinacy, when his deliberate treaſon endangers the very exiſtence of our Eaſtern dominions, he is to be protected and excuſed; his crime is to be palliated by the voice of patriotiſm at home; his puniſhment to be miſconſtrued into a flagrant act of violence. You and the public, I flatter myſelf, will ſee the matter in a very different light. Admitting that Cheyt Sing may be *morally* vindicated for ſeizing the opportunity of our embarraſſments to throw off his yoke, Mr. Haſtings is no leſs *morally* excuſable for diſappointing his deſign, and praiſe-worthy for ſo vigorouſly ſupporting the intereſts of his conſtituents. Cheyt Sing's expulſion from his Zemindary had no relation to his intended fine, for he never knew the intention—nor did he reſiſt the fine, but the arreſt. That arreſt furniſhed him with an unexpected plea for his pre-determined revolt, which, it is as clear as the Sun, would have been promptly executed, had the arreſt never taken place. He was infatuated—He had received bad advice—I ſtill think him to have been led

 blindfold

blindfold to his own deſtruction. He had been taught to judge too lightly of the ſtrength of our Government, and too favourably of his own. Independance was his object, and for that he forfeited his allegiance. But though he might have had a hoary Franklin at his elbow, he certainly had no Waſhington: the ſucceſs which he never could hope from open hoſtilities, he ſought by cowardly aſſaſſination. And when his attempt was defeated, when he could do no more miſchief, and when the halter was already about his neck, he abjectly petitioned for the reſtoration of his wealth and territories in the deſpicable cant of ſlaviſh contrition.—The folly of his guilt can only be equalled by that of his repentance: had he been pardoned, his forgiveneſs would have been a pledge of impunity for the rebellion of every diſaffected Zemindar in India. He was therefore expelled *of neceſſity*; or rather, his eſtates were *ipſo facto* FORFEITED, from the inſtant that he took up arms: and it was but by an act of ſovereign clemency that the ſequeſtered Zemindary was continued in his family.

The right of investiture having thus fully escheated to the Company, the terms by which Cheyt Sing had been bound were no longer obligatory on either party. The Zemindary is known to be fully adequate to a very large increase of rent, and the pressing exigencies of Government rendered an advance (in itself exceedingly moderate) an object of the utmost consequence. It was entirely fair and reasonable in the Governor-General to propose this addition to the revenue, and it was equally optional in the new Rajah to have refused investiture on those conditions; but as the demands of Government, even on the new lease, bear no degree of comparison to the annual sum assessed on the lands, the present Zemindar has infinite cause to be pleased with his bargain.

Mr. Hastings might with great propriety, and in strict conformity to the feodal maxims of the Mogul Government, have demanded a large sum of money from the new Rajah, as a *Nuzzer*, or fine of renewal for his lease. In proof of this, I appeal to the last page but one of Appendix, No. 14, to the sixth report of the Select Committee of last session,

wherein

wherein is quoted an anſwer from the Roy-Royan, and Canongoes, (who are in the ſame place explained to be *competent judges* of the cuſtoms of the country, and of the uſages of the former Government) to certain queſtions propounded to them in 1773, by the late Preſident and Council of Bengal, reſpecting the inheritable tenure of Zemindaries. "It "is uſual for the ſon of a Zemindar, after "his father's death, to repair to the preſence, "and *preſent a Nuzzer* to the King, *that a* "*new Sunnud may be made out* in his name."— A very little knowledge of Indian affairs will ſuffice to underſtand, that this *Nuzzer of renewal* is always proportionate to the ſuppoſed value of the lands, and does not, at the ſame time, impede the ſtipulation of an additional yearly rent: ſo that the Governor-General has here, in a very diſtinguiſhed manner, exerciſed the *reigning* virtue, *moderation*, by obtaining an eaſy advance on the rent only, without proceeding to the *legal* and cuſtomary extremity of a *fine of renewal*.— On the whole a traitor has been puniſhed as he deſerved; his uſeleſs hoards have been brought into the maſs of general circulation; his ſucceſſion is ſo much clear gain to the

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new Rajah, and the Company's affairs are aſſiſted in a critical moment by a fair and equitable augmentation of revenue. All parties are benefited at the expence of a villain and a murtherer. His *cauſe*, I truſt, will now experience the fate of his perſon.—

The grounds on which the attack on the ſecret article propoſed to have been inſerted in a treaty with the Raja of Berar, will probably proceed, I have taken from the twenty-third reſolution of the Secret Committee, read in the Houſe of Commons, on Monday, April 15, 1782. On that queſtion I believe *ſtronger* grounds of objection do not exiſt, or the learned mover of the reſolutions would aſſuredly have brought them forward—theſe, therefore, ſuch as they now ſtand, I ſhall beg leave with ſubmiſſion to canvaſs.—In the firſt place, this *ſecret article* of the treaty with Booſla never came to a preliminary diſcuſſion: It lies buried in the ſame grave with that excellent young man whoſe untimely death prevented the negotiation. We now talk of that article as if it had been of public notoriety, whereas it never was divulged in India; nor was it meant to be included in the treaty, if

if Booſla could have been brought to any terms of alliance without it. Moſt certain it is, that the Nizam never entertained a ſuſpicion of its exiſtence, or traces of it would be found in his expoſtulatory correſpondence with the two Preſidencies: yet we are baited with the hazardous "conſequence of an offenſive alliance with the Rajah of Berar, "for the expreſs purpoſe of recovering for "him the conqueſts made by the Nizam, and "of uniting the dangerous powers of the "Mahratta empire under one active command."—Theſe are arguments *ad captandum vulgus*—the timorous forebodings of prudential politics. Mr. Haſtings is a ſtateſman on a higher ſcale: and his genius, like that of Auguſtus over Antony's, looks down with an eye of unerring penetration on the ſouls of the Aſiatic Princes, and anticipates the ſtroke that ſhall fruſtrate their deſigns. We may wrangle and dogmatize here on the probable bias of contingent events, and magnify the formidable reſult of the Nizam's reſentment, or Booſla's ambition; but the Governor-General laughs at their pitiful manœuvres. The ſame hand that plays the pawn, can throw the king off the board with one ſlight touch of

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the finger: its importance is only among bits of wood or ivory of its own form and order. I argue, firſt, that the propoſed treaty with the Raja of Berar was not for the *expreſs* purpoſe of recovering for him what had been ſeized by the Nizam, but for the *expreſs purpoſe* of ſecuring to ourſelves a neceſſary revenue and a ſubſtantial barrier on the weſtern ſide of India: Secondly, that at the time of propoſing *that* treaty, the Nizam's ſingle power was of little or no weight in the political ſcale, and that his conſequence conſiſts in the prudence with which he has contrived to appear prepared for war, without engaging in actual hoſtilities. His *forte* lies in the Cabinet, and the late confederacy of the Indian Powers is his maſter-piece. But had Booſla and his Mahratta friends been the avowed antagoniſts of that league, inſtead of its parties, the Nizam's wiſdom muſt have ſought ſome freſh ſubterfuge for his own ſafety. "The "union of the Mahratta Empire under one "active command," is juſt as little to be dreaded. We have now for ſome years ſupported a war againſt all the Mahratta States but Berar on the one hand, while Hyder Ally (formidable even to the combined forces of

thoſe very Mahrattas) has exerted all his ſtrength againſt us on the other. Even ſhould we allow Booſla to have obtained his object in conſequence of our propoſed treaty: ſuppoſe him to have weakened the Nizam, united the Mahrattas, and ſettled with us;—where ſhould we have been more vulnerable than at preſent?—And who could have guaranteed to Booſla, the loyal and unſhaken adherence of all the reſtleſs, ambitious, and intriguing Chiefs of the Mahratta States to his ſtandard? The ſame policy which could detach Mhadajee Scindia from the combination of his countrymen, and at one effort convert him from an enemy to a moſt uſeful ally, would ſoon contrive the means to diſſever any other ſimilar confederacy. But the Governor-General knew that ſuch an union would naturally foſter in itſelf the ſeeds of its own diſſolution. The politics of Aſia have in fact undergone an entire revolution within a few centuries. Of the four mighty Empires which once ſhared the whole between them, that of China alone ſtands undiminiſhed. The thrones of the Tartar, the Perſian, and the Mogul, are fallen, never to riſe again. Their territories are ſubdivided, and the magic chain, which

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bound together and rivetted their authority, is vaniſhed into air. For myſelf, I attribute this phenomenon entirely to the diſcovery of the Cape of Good Hope, and to the improvement of navigation. Whether an imperceptible change of opinions and manners may have been formed by the gradual operation of commercial intercourſe, or by the influence of what other inſtrument this levelling ſyſtem may have been promoted, I do not attempt to explain: but the *cauſe* ſtrikes me with the ſtrongeſt conviction, and I am more implicitly confirmed in my ſentiments, when I conſider the preſent condition of China.—Thoſe commercial prohibitions, by which *one port only* is ſuffered to admit foreign veſſels through the whole aſtoniſhing extent of that empire, are to me the pledges of its duration. Should it once admit ſhips and colonies indiſcriminately,—*actum eſt de Republica.*—I am therefore inclined to think, that Aſia will never again ſee another very powerful and extenſive monarchy of any continuance, under a ſeries of Aſiatic Princes; and of all events, which can intereſt my countrymen in India, the union of all the Mahrattas ſeems to me the leaſt to be apprehended. After all, we need

fear neither any ſingle power, nor any combination of native powers in Aſia; *while the ſea is our own:* ſo long we ſhall predominate by land, and no longer. Naval ſtrength is like the iſland of Laputa; it commands dominion by neceſſity of ſituation. While men muſt either march or ſail to conqueſt, the latter will always beat; and if flying be among the arts yet diſcoverable by man, that nation which ſhall invent it, and preſerve the ſecret, will probably, for a time, rule over the habitable globe. —Had we laſt year cavilled leſs about the interior arrangements of Indian affairs, and diſpatched five ſhips of the line more to that quarter in proper time, we might now have aſſumed a tone of irreſiſtable ſuperiority in our negociations with the French for a participation of Indian territories. If the Raja of Berar, by our aſſiſtance, had weakened the Nizam, we ſhould no longer have heard of the danger of incurring *his* vengeance; and if we had been cloſely allied to theſe United Mahratta States, we had nothing to fear from *them*, till the alliance was broken. But even on that ſuppoſition, had the Mahratta powers attained to that formidable conſiſtency,

ſiſtency, ſuggeſted by the Penman of the Secret Committee's reſolutions, the other native Princes of India, would moſt eagerly have embraced a combination with us, to counteract the effects of their encroachments: ſo that in the very effort of raiſing the Mahrattas, we ſhould have enſured to ourſelves the means of ſecurity from their ingratitude. But the field of political conjecture is unlimited; its paths perplexing and uncertain. —It would be beſt to leave the fairy land of hypotheſis to that reſpectable veteran, whoſe peculiar province it is to give the graces of manly eloquence to the apologues of infantine ſimplicity; who, after having ineffectually tried his verſatile weapon on the firſt naval character the world ever ſaw, and on a commander, whoſe laurels the very blaſt of adverſity hath not been able to blight, now wields it with two-handed impetuoſity againſt the Chatham of the Eaſt. But *here* alſo, he will not find the conflict more eaſy, nor the victory more ſecure than in his former attacks. To charges of criminality, the defence will be ſhort, clear, and ſatisfactory. We wait with confidence for the trial. If it be urged, that Mr. Haſtings has involved

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the Company in expenſive and unneceſſary wars, we appeal to the records at the India-Houſe—to the reports and appendixes of two Committees, and on their authority refute the accuſation. If it be ſaid, that he hath loſt the confidence of the country powers; we anſwer, " that as far as preſumptive proof " can be obtained, on ſo complicated a mat-" ter, we are warranted in aſſerting, that " many of the firſt Potentates of India, and " in particular the Nabob Vizier of Oude, " the Raja of Berar, the Nabob of the Carnatic, and the Nizam have, in many " and very ſtrong inſtances, manifeſted " their perfect reliance on his integrity and " honour."—Finally, if it be ſuggeſted, that he hath forfeited the national character for moderation, we beg leave to premiſe upon the argument, " that moderation is " no part of our *national* character in " Aſia;" and we will afterwards deny, that the Governor-General hath in any degree forfeited our claim to that virtue. While we were known in India but as a Company of Merchants, while we ſubſiſted by the meer barter of commodities, and ſought by aſſumed affability the preference of a market, it cannot be ſuppoſed that our *national*

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character was an object of consideration. It was our *commercial character* on which we relied for success, and our behaviour was naturally suited to the subordination of our circumstances. It was Clive who gave us our first existence as a *nation* in the East, and Clive's virtues were not of the pitiful negative class. Valour and conduct formed the basis of his pile; justice and honour were the cement of the superstructure. *Then* it was that we exchanged the pliability of mercantile negotiation for the steadiness of political independence; that we acquired the character of a brave, a steady, and a generous people. If we are still to be considered as mere merchants at home, it is but just: here we possess neither kingdoms, nor revenues, nor armies: but we are not, on that account, to be deprived of our rights and privileges, warranted to us both by law and charter. If by that moderation which we are instructed to practice, it be meant that we should again reduce ourselves to our original state of traders in India, we reply, "That our *national character* among Indians will not be at all "improved by a meer compromise of power "among ourselves, and by substituting a

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" Governor-General of Bengal on the part " of the Crown, for him appointed by the " Company."—But the language of Miniſtry is, that it is *expedient* to remove the preſent Governor-General: and who ſhall fix that ſhifting Proteus *expediency*, to bring him to cloſe examination?—It will be ſaid, that Mr. Haſtings's recall will procure an immediate ceſſation of hoſtilities in Aſia.—The means however ſeem very inadequate to the end propoſed. There are, as I think, but two methods of bringing an obſtinate enemy to terms: the one is by victory—the other by conceſſion. For the former, no man can be more amply qualified than Sir Eyre Coote: he is the idol of his army, the inſpiring genius of the field, and under him a Seapoy is ſomewhat more than an Aſiatic. The latter method may be deemed more conſiſtent with the preſent *moderating principles*: but its *ſafety* is yet very far from demonſtration. If conqueſt be within the powers of humanity, we need not look farther for it than to Coote: but he never could have taken the field, nor would he have maintained his poſt a ſingle day without the wonderful aſſiſtance and ſupplies furniſhed him by the Governor-General of Ben-

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gal: and it will at leaſt be a matter of much difficulty to find a man more fertile in reſources, and more gifted with the powers of civil exertion, than Mr. Haſtings: A new Governor, we are told, would be more *moderate* in the articles on which he would agree to a peace. But we have not yet inconteſtably aſcertained the *ultimatum* of Mr. Haſtings's political *moderation.* His ſucceſſor would probably be a ſtranger to the internal ſtrength, to the relative advantages and private views of the different States of India; in their language he muſt be totally deficient: and at all events, will be reduced to the neceſſity of acting upon the dictates of ſubſidiary knowledge. He will ſee all things through a cloud, and at ſecond hand. The preſent Governor-General can hear, and ſpeak, and judge for himſelf. While we condemn his want of moderation, we forget that this very conduct may be founded on the meer principles of public preſervation.—It is probable enough, that he may have ſo accurately compared our exigencies with our means, as to have ſeen the abſolute impoſſibility as well as impropriety of conceſſion.—We have a large eſtabliſhment, an increaſing demand for money, and a heavy debt; it ſurely would not be prudent *(even in a na-*

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tional view, as long as the old adage "*salus populi suprema lex esto*," shall be found policy) to admit of such a peace as should leave us no human chance of ever reducing our incumbrances! A peace founded on the voluntary dereliction of those express objects for which we have so long contended, would prove no less faithless than disreputable. An acknowledgment of pr esent inferiority would but provoke future demands; and if we concede any thing now for the sake of tranquillity, the moment our enemies shall have recruited their strength, they will again commence hostilities, in hopes of farther concessions. To close the war, without settling the balance of power, would but expose the scale to the perpetual chance of new vibrations from the slightest accident: we have nearly obtained possession of the beam, and why should we wantonly reject it? The present struggles may be composed on a system that shall preserve the calm of all our Asiatic connexions for half a century, or they may be suspended by an insidious truce, which all the parties will be forward to break. I will hazard a conjecture, which I dare flatter myself, Sir, You will not wholly reject. Negotiations for a general peace in Europe have been

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for ſome time on the tapis: among the various reaſons imagined for their protraction, a difference with regard to the participation of territories in India is the moſt generally received. The French are thought to ſpin out the preliminaries, in hopes that ſome unfavourable turn of our affairs in the Carnatic may enable them to dictate more humiliating terms. Now I have not a doubt, but if our legiſlature, at the firſt opening of the preſent ſeſſion, had ſuddenly recalled Mr. Haſtings, and inſiſted on his quitting the chair on the inſtant arrival of his ſucceſſor, that the Cabinet of Verſailles would abruptly have broken off the treaty, and have truſted more to the effects of our ill-timed reſolution, than to their own arms, *(an object which I think them to have ſtill in view)* for the event of another Indian campaign. Our new Governor, Sir, were he to deſcend from heaven in their ſight, would excite diſtruſt in ſome of our allies, fear in many, and an expectation of change in all. Intereſt would induce ſome to ſtipulate for freſh advantages as the price of their alliance: apprehenſion would perſuade others to ſtand neuter, until they ſhould have ſeen the probable conſequences of the new Governor's

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conduct. A circumſtance which thus damped the ardour of our friends, would in the ſame degree add vigour to the exertions of our adverſaries. Chance at leaſt would be in their favour. They have beholden but Clive and Haſtings, on whoſe ſide deſtiny itſelf ſeemed to contend, and they know as well as ourſelves that extraordinary men do not uſe to ſpring up like muſhrooms. On the whole, this doctrine of *expediency*, which is now to be the engine for Mr. Haſtings's removal, was the very plea for his continuation, at the laſt General Court of Proprietors. I appeal to the proteſts of the diſſentient Directors, I appeal to the nervous and irreſiſtable eloquence of the day's debate, whether any reaſon be ſo forcibly urged, or ſo decidedly concluſive, as that of the neceſſity for prolonging the authority of the preſent Governor-General, *on account of the very perplexed ſtate of our affairs. This* is the argument on which he has been ſupported by his immediate employers, it is now the charge on which he is to be degraded. Admirable pliability of language, which (as we are told of a Hebrew word that may ſignify either to bleſs or to curſe) can ſave at one end of the town and damn at the other! Like the obliterated

literated characters of ſome illegible inſcription, that ſuit equally with an Otho or an old button, a Roman ſhield, or a ruſty pot-lid!

When Mr. Haſtings's recall ſhall have been irrevocably doomed by the whole legiſlative power, the buſineſs of *expediency* is ſtill but half accompliſhed. The greater moiety of the taſk is to find another Governor-General more fit for our purpoſe, and to eſtabliſh him in our opinions on the baſis of conviction. If You be diſſatisfied with the capacity of your bailiff or ſteward, you diſmiſs him, I grant, but not till you have ſeen another whoſe character you approve on a cloſe enquiry, and whoſe abilities you aſcertain to be ſuch as will ſuit you, by the manner in which he has been uſed to exerciſe them. A Governor-General is the ſteward of the Company: his capacity muſt be ſuited to the nature of his office, and be broken in to its functions by experience. The bungling work made by General Clavering and his majority, the glaring abſurdities obtruded on the public by Mr. F——, after ſix years reſidence in the habits of buſineſs, have given the Company a ſurfeit of *experimental government*;

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" Circuit, and the countenance given by him " to very improper meaſures, on ſeveral " occaſions, relative to the letting of the " diſtricts, deſerve the ſtrongeſt marks of our " diſpleaſure; *but as thoſe ſubjects were foreign* " *to the General's military profeſſion*, we ſhall " not, on the preſent occaſion, proceed fur- " ther, than to expreſs our diſapprobation " of his conduct."—Another inſtance I find in Appendix, No. 3, to the firſt report of the Select Committee of laſt ſeſſion.

Extract from General Sir Eyre Coote's minute, in conſultation, 24th Oct. 1780.

" As the determining upon points, relative " to law proceedings, has fallen ſo little " *within the limits of my profeſſion*, I acknow- " ledge myſelf *inadequate* to the forming a " thorough judgment, concerning the plan " propoſed by the Governor-General."— Here then, we have one of the Company's Commanders in Chief acquitted of reſponſi- bility for errors of the firſt importance in revenue matters, on account of his *profeſſion*. Another, whoſe ſervices have but this inſtant been honoured with the thanks of both Houſes, and *who was once* (as I have heard) *a Candidate for the Government of Bengal*, pleads *his profeſſion* in apology for not enter- ing into the diſcuſſion of a legal arrangement.

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Yet revenue, at least, is the first concern of the Bengal administration, and frequent occasions will arise for the exercise of a tried judgment, on questions of coinage, of commerce, of civil and political negociation, of practical government, and of legislation. Far be it from me to suggest, and I do from my soul renounce the idea, that any one of those noble and honourable persons, whom the conjectures of the public have, at different times, named for the succession to that high office, be not amply qualified for the task. While I allow them every advantage of natural and acquired abilities, I am within the pale of respect, when I venture to hint, that experience may be wanting to the completion of their characters: nor do I think that any one of them could more effectually consult his own honour, as well as his duty to his country, than by dedicating a portion of his time, to the habits of seeing with his own eyes, and of judging upon his own knowledge, before he launches out to act upon his own bottom.

I have now, Sir, only to beg pardon for the length of this intrusion: its design, I am sure, You will not condemn. If it should

in the ſmalleſt degree ſerve the Company, whoſe intereſts I have moſt warmly at heart, and a man for whoſe merit I have the moſt profound veneration, I ſhall very heartily rejoice: ſhould it by any means ſerve my country, even at the expence of thoſe objects which induced me to take up the pen, I ſhall ſtill have a conſcious pride in my labour: ſhould it fail in all points to be ſerviceable, and ſhare the common oblivion of diurnal publications, I have yet the flattering aſſurance of your promiſed exertions in the ſame cauſe, to give new life to my expectations, and to dart a ſplendor where I have but raiſed a miſt.

I have the honour to remain,

SIR,

Your moſt obedient ſervant,

DETECTOR.

4th of January, 1783.